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The McConnell Family in History

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AN ADDRESS

BY

R. KIRK McCONNELL OF GREENSBURG, PA.,

AT THE

SESQUI-CENTENNIAL

OF

McCONNELLSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA.

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## THE McCONNELL FAMILY IN HISTORY.

On this occasion it is fitting for us to inquire into the history of the family of Daniel McConnell, the founder of McConnellsburg.

It is quite likely that all McConnells, whether they come from Scotland or Ireland and whether they be Catholic or Protestant, are descended from Alexander Konnel, Laird of Dunnyveg and the Glens, Scotland and Ireland respectively.

Reverend E. W. J. McConnel of Staveley Vicarage, Kendal, England, who has investigated McConnell lore so thoroughly, informs us that McConnell is just another spelling of the name "Macdonell." There is no such name as Macdonell or Macdonald in Gaelic; in that language the name is spelled "MacDhomhnuill" (son of Brown-eye). In Gaelic, however, after c in Mac the D becomes silent and the name is pronounced somewhat as though it were spelled MacHonnell, which the ear cannot distinguish from pronunciation of the now popular form of spelling, "McConnell." The "Mac" or abbreviated form "Mc" in Gaelic, means "son of."

In ancient times if a Gael named "Iain" had a son named "Alister" the son would be surnamed Alister MacIain, and if in turn Alister MacIain had a son named "Donald" the latter would be newly surnamed Donald MacAlister and so on, each child receiving the Christian name of the father with the





prefix "Mac" as a surname. The surnames were not family names as we use them today. There came a time in Scotland, however, when these surnames became fixed in succeeding generations as family names are fixed today. In the line of Daniel McConnell's ancestors there was one Daniel Konnel, whose children according to the old established rule, were surnamed MacKonnel. Contrary to the old rule, however, their children and all their descendants in the male lines to the present day continued to use the surname McConnell as a family name.

The use of this name was peculiar to the respective families of the Chiefs of Clan Iain Mhoir, or Clan Donald South of the Scottish Highlands. The clansmen of Clan Donald South were surnamed Macdonalds and it was only a Chief or descents of a Chief that signed his surname McConnell. The surname McConnell is *prima facie* evidence that the bearer thereof is a descendant of the ancient house of Dunnyveg.

Clan Iain Mhoir or Clan Donald South was a branch of Clan Donald or Clan Donald North, the Chiefs of which the "Poems of Ossian," published in 1750 and other ancient annals trace back to Constantine Centimachus who lived about A. D. 125. Including his name there are thirty-seven Chiefs of Clan Donald named before we come to the name John, father of John Mhoir Tanistear who was the first Chief of Clan Donald South.

Sir Walter Scott in his poem "Pibroch of Donuil Dhu," calls this branch of Clan Donald "Clan Conuil," as appears in the first stanza:





“Pibroch of Donuil Dhu  
Pibroch of Donuil,  
Wake thy wild voice anew,  
Summon Clan Conuil.”

The first three Chiefs of Clan Donald South were not surnamed McConnell because the name McConnell had not been adopted as a family name at so early a date. Since these Chiefs were just as much ancestors of the McConnells in the male line as though they were so surnamed, and since a comprehensive understanding of the history of the McConnell family requires it, we shall begin with the first Chief of Clan Iain Mhoir and recite the history briefly through each succeeding Chief to the last one that so functioned. They are all ancestors of Daniel McConnell.

**Iain Mhoir Tanistear, First Chief of Clan  
Iain Mhoir.**

The founder of the family of Dunnyveg, which played so prominent and distinguished a part in the annals of the Clan Cholla, both in Scottish Highlands and in Ireland, was Iain Mhoir or as his name is written in English John Mor, the second son of John, Lord of the Isles by his marriage with the Princess Margaret Stewart of Scotland, daughter of King Robert the Second. Translated into modern parlance the name is Big John. This group became known in Celtic Scotland as Clan Iain Mhoir or Clan Donald South. Iain Mhoir's father, John, Lord of the Isles, bestowed on him 120 merklands in Kintyre, the rocky peninsula of Scotland which ap-





proaches nearest to Ireland, with the castles of Sadel and Dunaverty and 60 merklands in Isla, with the castle of Dunnyveg.

A portion of this rocky promontory was later called "Connal" after Alexander Connal, Chief of the Clan Iain Mhoir.

It is mentioned by Sir Walter Scott in "The Lord of the Isles," first canto, eighth stanza, as follows:

"And listening to its own wild wind  
From where Minarry sternly placed  
O'erawes the woodland and the waste  
To where Dunstaffnage hears the raging  
Of Connal with his rocks engaging."

This place may have been used for the location of a church or as the burial place for the Chiefs of Dunnyveg, for we find it named "Kilmaconnel" in the fourth canto, twelfth stanza, of the same poem as follows:

Up Tarbat's western lake they bore  
Then dragged their bark this isthmus oer,  
As far as Kilmaconnel's shore."

The possession of so large a territory elevated John Mor, on the very threshold of his career, to a position of great prominence in the Highland polity and in due course he became a leading actor in the island drama.

Like all of his ancestors John Mor Tanistear was a haughty independent chief. His dominating





policy was to preserve the independence of the Western Gael from the aggression of the throne of Scotland. With this in mind he entered heartily into the Anglo-Scottish quarrel on the English side.

That quarrel had come to a crisis in the summer of 1388 and only a few days before the sanguinary engagement at Otterburn, John Mor Tanistear and his brothers Godfrey and Donald were received at the English Court by King Richard II. On the 14th of July, the brothers entered into a friendly alliance with the English King, which was renewed again and again in the course of the following years.

Not long after his reception at the English Court John Mor Tanistear married Margery Bisset, heiress of the Glens in Antrim, Ireland. The Bissets, who were of Greek extraction, came over to England with William the Conqueror and settled after a time in Scotland. Before the close of the 13th century they had acquired the seven lordships of the Glens in Antrim. Through his marriage with Margery, the only daughter of John Bisset, the last male head of this family, Iain Mhoir Tanistear succeeded to the heritage of the Glens, extending from the Inver to the Boyse. From this time onwards he and his successors were styled "Lord of Dunnyveg and the Glens." The addition of this large territory in Ireland to his possessions in Argyle, Scotland, elevated him into the position of a magnate of the first importance.

On the death of Richard II. of England, John Mor Tanistear and his brother transferred their





alliance to that King's successor, Henry IV. Twice during the year 1400 they visited his court and in the year 1408 John Mor Tanistear is again found visiting his court.

In the struggle between the Lord of the Isles, nephew of Tanistear, and the Regent Albany in 1411, Iain Mor Tanistear had his full share. On the day of Harlaw which proved so disastrous to the Regent's hosts, John Mor Tanistear at the head of the reserve, contributed largely to the victory of the men of the Isles. When the Regent afterward followed the Lord of the Isles into Argyle the resolute Tanistear again came forward to strike a blow for his race and Albany was repulsed.

The Scottish King finding he was unable to defeat Tanistear in battle, laid a trap for him. He sent James Campbell to arrange the details. In the words of the Sleat Seanachie: "John (Mor Tanistear) came to the place appointed with a small retinue, but James Campbell with a very large train and told of the Kings' intention of granting him all the lands possessed by Macdonalds' conditionally he would if he held him and served him. John said he did not know wherein his nephew wronged the King and that his nephew was as deserving of his rights as he could be and that he would not accept of these lands; nor serve for them, till his nephew would be set at liberty; and that his nephew himself was as nearly related to the King as he would be. James Campbell, hearing the answer, said he was his prisoner. John made all the resistance he could, till, overpowered by numbers he was killed." Camp-





bell was later executed for this murder, protesting however that it was done by the King's orders. Iain Mhoir Tanistear as Chief of Clan Donald South was succeeded by his eldest son, Donald Ballock.

### **Donald Ballock, Second Chief of Clan Iain Mhoir.**

Donald Ballock was a bold warrior. He led a revolt and defeated the forces of King James at Inverlochy. He brought his campaign in Lochaber to an end and by paying an unwelcome visit to the renegade Camerons and Clan Chattan who had deserted the standard of their Chief in the previous campaign.

However, Donald Ballock was subsequently forced to take refuge on his Antrim estate. Even there he was not free from the royal vengeance and it is hard to tell what would have happened except for the ready wit of his friend, the Irish Chief Hugh Buy O'Neill, who, with grim humor, presented the Scottish King with a human head which the credulous King James received as that of the rebel Lord of Dunnyveg. Donald Ballock remained on his Irish estates until after the death of King James in 1437, when he returned to Dunnyveg. Donald Ballock died at Isla toward the end of 1476 at an advanced age.

Donald Ballock had married first Johanna, daughter of Con O'Neil, by whom he had an only son, John Mor, who was his successor.





**Sir John Mor, Third Chief of Clan  
Iain Mor.**

Little is known of Sir John beyond the genealogies of the Clan. He was a party to the Treaty of Ardthornish but is not heard from again for many years. There is every reason to believe that during this period he resided on his Irish estates.

The upheaval caused by the final forfeiture of the Lord of the Isles in 1493, however, brings him again into prominence. At that time King James visited the Highlands and John rendered homage. He was knighted by the King and confirmed in his old possessions; but the King left a garrison at the castles of Tarbert, Dunaverty and others which gave offense to the proud Sir John. Before the King had left Kintyre, Sir John and his son John Cathanach stormed Dunaverty, dislodged the lowland garrison and hanged the governor. On the King's return to Edinburgh, Sir John was declared traitor and he was summoned for treason. The rebel knight ignored the summons and betook himself to Isla. Here he might have been safe were it not for the treachery of his kinsman John MacIan of Ardnamurchan who in the guise of friendship apprehended Sir John, his son John Cathanach and their accomplices. After a summary trial Sir John and his son were convicted and hanged on Broughmuir in 1499. John Cathanach's three sons, John Mor, John Og and Donald Balloch were executed at the same time. His remaining son Alexander fled to Ireland.

Sir John Mor had married Sarah, daughter of Felim O'Neil of Clanchoy by whom he had two sons,





John Cathanach and Alistair Carrach. The latter settled in Ireland. He was knighted by the Earl of Sussex in 1556 for services against the Irish and Scots and was granted the Barony of Dunbece.

John Cathanach having been executed at the same time as his father, Sir John Mor, never served as Chief of Clan Iain Mhoir. Since the title to that position passes through him, he is named next in order. He married Cecelia Savage, daughter of Lord of the Ardes in Antrim by whom, among others, he had Alexander Konnel, who succeeded his grandfather, Sir John Mhoir.

#### **Alexander Konnel, Fourth Chief of Clan Iain Mhoir.**

At Glenan in the Tarof on May 6, 1520, "Alexander Konnel de Dunoveg with his hand on the pen promised that he would be to Sir John Campbell of Calder a cuming man and servand hym self and all his brance of the Clan Donyl that he is cumying of."

This is the first record in history we have of the name Konnel, from which the present name McConnell is derived.

For his services Alexander Konnel received a lease for five years of 45 merklands in Isla, 15 merklands of Jura and the Island of Colonsay. From 1528 to 1531 Alexander was in revolt and fought against the Campbells, but he was pardoned June 7, 1531. To guarantee that he would keep the peace, his son James was left with the King as hostage.





The young heir of Dunnyveg remained at Court several years and by the King's express wishes received a liberal education under Dean Henderson of Holyrood, the effects of which were apparent in after years.

During this interval, the Earl of Argyle accused Alexander Konnel of many disturbances of the peace, which Alexander was able to refute to the satisfaction of the King. The Earl of Argyle was summoned and deprived of his offices which were conferred upon Alexander. From time to time, till his death, Alexander kept up a constant correspondence with the King. He received from his Majesty on more than one occasion presents of bows and arrows, doubtless in order to encourage archery among the Highlanders.

In 1532 Alexander Konnel raised 7000 men with whom he crossed to Ireland and drove the English from Ulster. The most remarkable thing to be noticed in the later career of Alexander is his loyalty to the Scottish throne which, undoubtedly, was due to the generous nature of the Scottish monarch and his attachment to Alexander's son James who was educated at his Court.

Alexander Konnel married Catherine, daughter of John MacIain of Ardnamurchan by whom he had eleven children who were surnamed McConell. Prior to this time there was no appearance of a family name as we know it.

The first appearance of the name McConnell we find in the ancient record is on the Justiciary





Records of Scotland, where under date of July 23, 1529 we find noted: "The King called upon the Justice-Clerk to receive James MacConnell, the son of Alexander, Lord of Dunnyveg, to relax them from our horne."

Since these are the first McConnells to appear in history under that surname, we shall mention them in order.

1. Donald McConnell who according to Irish manuscripts had the surname Malak or Malaicht, that is cursed. The reason given for this sinister epithet was that he was cursed by his mother before birth, because her husband Alexander Konnel had killed her five brothers in vengeance for the treachery wrought upon his family by her father MacIain of Ardnamurchan. She is reported to have prayed that her unborn offspring should never see the light of day and as a result Donald was born blind. For this reason he was not considered as a successor to his father as Chief of the Clan.

2. James McConell who succeeded his father and of whom we shall hear further.

3. Angus McConell who was known as Angus the haughty. He was slain in a conflict with Shane O'Neil in 1565.

4. Coll McConell from whom the house of Colonsay is descended.

5. Somerled McConell or Sorle McConell as he signs a submission in 1586, from whom the house of Antrim in Ireland is descended.

6. Alexander or Alastair Og McConnell as his name is signed to a letter to Lord Deputy of Ireland





in 1557, was killed in battle with Turlough Luineach O'Neil in 1566.

7. Donald Gorm McConell who left a son Donald.

8. Brian Carrach McConell who was killed in battle in Ireland 1568.

9. Ranald Og McConell of whom nothing further is known.

10. Meve McConell who married Hector Maclean of Coll.

11. Mary McConell who married Hector Mor Maclean of Duart.

Alexander Konnel of Dunnyveg died at Sterling while on a visit to the King in 1538 and was buried in the High Church of the town. He was succeeded by his son.

### **James McConell, Fifth Chief of Clan Iain Mhoir.**

James McConell, Fifth Chief of Clan Iain Mhoir, was usually spoken of by the English by the name of Colkitto. It is by that name he is mentioned by the immortal Milton in his eleventh sonnet written in 1645 as follows:

“A book was writ of late call'd Tetrachordon,  
And woven close, both matter, form, and  
style;  
The subject new: it walk'd the town a  
while,  
Numb'ring good intellects; now seldom  
pored on.



Cries the stall-reader, Bless us! what a word on  
A title-page is this! and some in file  
Stand spelling false, while one might walk  
to Mile  
End Green. Why is it harder, Sirs, than  
Gordon,

Colkitto, or Macdonnell, or Galasp?  
Those rugged names to our like mouths  
grow sleek  
That would have made Quintilian stare and  
gasp.

Thy age, like ours, O Soul of Sir John Cheke,  
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,  
When thou taught'st Cambridge, and King  
Edward Greek."

However, a commission from Donald Dubh, Lord of the Isles to treat with Henry VIII. of England dated July 23, 1545, names two members of this family: "Angus Maconill, breuder german to James Maconill."

In a letter to the King of England dated January 24, 1546 he signs his name as "James McConil of Dunnywalk and Glennis," while in the body of the letter his name is spelled as James McConaill. In a letter to Lord Deputy Sussex in 1562 he signs as "James MakConnell of Dunavaige."

Shortly after James McConnell became chief of the Clan Donald South, Donald Dubh, Chief of Clan Donald North, otherwise known as the Lord of the Isles died in 1545, the islanders selected James Mc-







Connell as their chief. However, for some reason, he never further qualified for that prime position.

His prominence in history rests chiefly on his activities in Ireland against the English, where he defeated them in Ulster in 1557. He is referred to by Sussex as the best of all the Macdonalds in Ireland. While James McConnell was in Ireland, Sussex ravaged the coast of Kintyre and in a letter to Queen Elizabeth dated October 6, 1558, referring to this expedition, he says: "The same daye (September 19th) I landed and burned eight myles of leynght and therewith James McConell's chief howse called Soudell." However, Sussex found he could not expel James from Ulster in this manner.

Queen Elizabeth of England when writing to Queen Mary of Scotland, complained that "one James MacOnell, sometye named the Lorde of the Oute Isles" detained as a prisoner one George Bustsyde "a poure gentyllman of Yngland," whom he had taken at Rathlin. She further said he had been a prisoner with "my Lorde James Maconell thes ten yere." James accepted a ransom of 120 crowns and the English Ambassador Randolph's best horse and the "poure gentyllman of Yngland" was allowed his liberty.

While James McConnell was in Kintyre, his brother Sorley Buy McConnell who was in Ireland, appears not to have realized the magnitude of Shane O'Neill's preparations for war. O'Neill had accepted a commission from the English to drive James McConnell's forces out of Ireland. This was Shane's





opportunity to strike while the forces of the Scot were divided.

On learning of these preparations Sorley Buy caused warning fires to be lit on the prominent headlands along the Antrim coast, to indicate his distress to James McConnell in Kintyre, who so interpreted these signals. James sent out the firey cross summoning the clansmen and went to the rescue, at the same time instructing his brother Alexander McConnell to follow as soon as further forces could be collected.

On landing at Cushindun Bay, James was confronted with his own Castle of Redbay in flames. He saw at a glance that the work of destruction had commenced. The appearance of Sorley Buy with meager forces in full retreat before O'Neill convinced him of the grave state of affairs. He joined the retreat and the combined forces fell back on Ballycastle in the hope that Alexander McConnell would arrive with reinforcements from Kintyre. James drew up his forces at the foot of Glentaisi and faced the foe. Here in the early morning of May 2, 1565, the O'Neills numbering more than 2000 opposed the Scots with little more than half that number. The issue could not be doubted. A desperate and bloody battle ensued. The Dunnyveg forces fought with conspicuous bravery but they were overpowered by superior numbers and almost totally annihilated. According to O'Neill's own estimate 700 of them perished.

James McConnell who was severely wounded and his brother Sorley Buy with nineteen other





leaders, were taken prisoners, while another brother Angus McConnell was among the slain. Alexander Og McConnell followed his brother James with a force of 900 men and landed at Rathlin but on hearing of the defeat, returned to Kintyre. James McConnell was sent by O'Neill as a prisoner to Castle Crocke, near Strathbane, where, after a short confinement, on July 5, 1565 he is supposed to have been murdered. Shane reported the death of James in a letter to the Privy Council of Ireland, dated August 25, 1565.

The impression produced by the death of James McConnell in Ireland may be gathered from the entry in the Annals of the Four Masters, where it is recorded that "the death of this gentleman was generally bewailed; he was a paragon of hospitality and prowess, a festive man of many troops, a bountiful and munificent man. His peer was not to be found at that time among the Clan Donald of Ireland or Scotland; and his own people would not have deemed it too much to give his weight in gold for his ransom, if he could have been ransomed."

James McConnell had married Agnes, daughter of Colin Campbell, Earl of Argyle, by whom he had:

1. Archibald McConnell, his successor.
2. Angus McConnell, who succeeded his brother Archibald.
3. Ranald McConnell of Smerby who acted a prominent part in troubles of the house of Dunnevegh with Maclean of Duart, with whom he was a hostage for some time. In 1614 he held the fort of





Lochgorm and entered into a bond to surrender it to Sir John Campbell of Cawdor which covenant he performed January 28, 1615.

4. Coll McConnell who carried out a terrible vengeance upon the Macleans at Mullintrae under the mistaken idea that his brother Ronald had been put to death while a hostage at Duart.

5. Donald Gorm McConnell who possessed the barony of Carey in Antrim granted to him by patent dated September 18, 1584. He was killed at Ardrary, Ireland in 1586 in a battle against the English.

6. Alexander McConnell who possessed for some time the barony of Glenarm. He was killed at the same time as his brother Donald at Ardrary.

7. Ineen Dubh McConnell or "black haired" a daughter who married Hugh O'Donnell of Donegal.

James McConnell was succeeded by his son Archibald.

### **Archibald McConnell, Sixth Chief of Clan Iain Mor.**

Archibald McConnell's career as Chief was brief and uneventful, probably due to the terrible slaughter of his clansmen at Glentaisi. On May 5, 1564 he received a charter from Queen Mary of Scotland for lands forming a part of the barony of Bar. He made an unsuccessful attempt to effect the release of his uncle Sorley Buy. He is mentioned in a precept of Clare Constant by Archibald, fifth Earl of Argyle in 1565 and that is about all we





know of him. He must have died not later than 1569 for in that year his younger brother Angus was acting as Lord of Kintyre and Chief of Clan Iain Mhoir.

### **Angus McConnell, Seventh Chief of Clan Iain Mhoir.**

On the 6th May 1569 Angus McConnell, as heir of his father received a precept of Clare Constant in Ardnamurchan, and on the 10th October 1570 he received a precept of infefment dated at Duart, as heir of his brother Archibald.

On the 23d April 1573 the great Turlough Lynagh O'Neill, successor to Shane O'Neill, visited Edinburgh and it is recorded that he lodged "ane complaint aganis Angus MacConeil becus he wold not be subdewit to the Earl of Argyle," O'Neill's stepson. However, at this time Clan Iain Mhoir appears to have recovered its former glory and nothing appears to have come of the complaint.

Angus visited Sir Laughlan Maclean to attempt to settle a quarrel. Maclean took him prisoner and detained him until he renounced his right to the Rhinns of Isla, requiring him to leave his son James and brother Ranald as hostages.

Sir Lachlan went to take sesine of the lands in July 1586, taking with him his hostage James McConnell, the heir to Dunnyveg and leaving Ranald, the other hostage, in irons in Duart Castle. Angus extended to Sir Laughlan an invitation to visit him





at Mullintrae which was accepted. After a banquet Sir Laughlan together with his hostage James McConnell and eighty-six of his men were housed next to Angus' castle. Angus gathered three or four hundred of his retainers and then called Sir Laughlan out to have his sleeping draught. But McLean, being suspicious, refused to come out. After repeated demands Sir Laughlan, taking the hostage James McConnell on his shoulders, came to the portal of his abode. James was required to ask that Angus, his father, spare the life of Sir Laughlan, his uncle. Angus finally relented, but left Sir Laughlan a prisoner, together with all his men.

A kinsman of Duost circulated a false report that Ranald McConnell, the hostage of Sir Laughlan who had been left in chains at Duart Castle, had been murdered. It is said that two of the Maclean prisoners were killed each day until only Sir Laughlan and his uncle John Dubh of Morvern remained. These survivors were finally released although hostages were taken by Angus and his brother Ranald was released before the liberty of these survivors was granted. Angus was pardoned for this offense by the King.

The King entreated the Earl of Huntly to restrain the lawlessness of these Highlanders. On April 20, 1587 he commissioned Huntly for this purpose but reserved the Chiefs of Dunneyveg and Duart to his own royal influence as he states: "For we have written effectuously to Angus McConnell and hes spoken with MacClane, being heir for the same effect." This, however, proved to be but a





lull in the storm and hostilities continued until 1591 when both Duart and Dunneyveg were invited to Edinburgh by the King, where they were both confined. In 1592 Angus was set at liberty upon certain conditions, but was required to leave his son James McConnell with the King as a hostage.

Angus failed to keep the terms of his pardon and in June 1593 he was summoned for treason and a sentence of forfeiture was imposed. In 1596 the King again moved against him, but Angus again made his peace with the King, one of the terms being: "That James McConnell (Angus' son) shall remain with him (the King) at Court and not depart till he be relieved by his Highness."

Angus again regretted his submission and again assumed control of his property. In a quarrel with the Laird of Loupe, he was captured and his son James McConnell assumed command of the Clan Iain Mhoir.

While at Court as a hostage James McConnell became quite a favorite and was knighted by the King. After he assumed control of affairs of the Clan during his incarceration of his father, Sir Laughlin Maclean renewed his feud with Dunnyveg and claimed all of Isla. In 1598 Sir James McConnell offered him a compromise, but it was refused. A fierce battle was fought between their respective forces at a place called Traigh Ghruinneart. Dunnyveg's forces were outnumbered, but they defeated the Macleans and Sir Laughlan, eighty of his kinsmen and two hundred of his common soldiers were killed.





Sir James McConnell was shot through the body with an arrow and left on the field. However, he was later discovered and restored to health. James McConnell offered terms of submission to the crown which were approved; but the Earl of Argyle, who espoused the Maclean cause in this quarrel, opposed their acceptance and the compromise fell through.

Sir James refused to surrender the control of affairs to Angus McConnell, his father, who had by this time, 1603, regained his liberty. With the assistance of the Campbells he captured Sir James and confined him in Blackness Castle. Sir James attempted to escape and was sent to Edinburgh Castle.

Angus in 1606 attempted to compose his differences with the King, but Argyle who controlled the Privy Council, plotted against him, and blocking the compromise, proposed himself as tenant of the crown for the lands in Kintyre. In 1607 Argyle prevailed and the lands of Dunnyveg in Kintyre and the island of Jura were confirmed to him. In July 1607 Argyle took possession of these lands and Angus was forced to flee to Ireland.

On August 4, 1609, Dunnyveg Castle was surrendered by Angus Og to Lord Ochiltree who was acting for the Privy Council. On January 1, 1612 Angus McConnell surrendered his title to all his estates to Sir John Campbell on payment of 6000 merks. Angus appears to have spent his latter days with the Stewarts of Bute. He died in Roth-esay on October 21, 1614 and was buried at his old Castle of Saddle.



He had married Mary, daughter of Hector Og Maclean of Duart and had by her:

1. James McConnell, who is usually considered his successor.

2. Angus Og McConnell who married Katharine, daughter of Duncan Campbell of Danna. He had two sons of whom nothing further is known. He was most treacherously executed in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh, July 8, 1675.

3. Alexander Og McConnell who was drowned at Caol Isle October 3, 1613, without leaving lawful heirs.

4. Mary McConnell who married Sir Donald Macdonald of Clanranald.

5. Margaret McConnell who married Ranald Macdonald of Benbecula.

6. Annabell McConnell who married Archibald Macdonald of Largie.

It has been seen that Sir James McConnell was in prison at the time of his father's death and that Clan Iain Mhoir had been deprived of all its privileges as a reigning house. However, it is usually considered that Angus was succeeded by his oldest son Sir James McConnell.





**James McConnell, Eighth Chief of Clan  
Iain Mhoir.**

We have seen that Sir James McConnell was sent to Edinburgh Castle after his capture by his father, assisted by the Campbells in 1603. He was not brought to trial until May 1609. He was charged with being guilty of fire-raising at Askomull as well as the seizure and unnatural treatment of his father in 1598, thus committing "maist high and manifest treason," which it certainly was not. His trial was a great farce and a travesty on justice. However, Sir James McConnell was convicted of treason and condemned to be beheaded as a traitor and his possessions forfeited to the crown. The sentence was never carried out and Sir James was recommitted to prison.

On May 23, 1615 Sir James escaped from prison and 2000 pounds were offered for his capture. He returned to Kintyre where the Earl of Argyle with a large force surrounded him. Sir James escaped and took refuge in Isla, but Argyle pursued him there. Sir James again escaped, going to a small island off the coast of Ireland and later took refuge in Galway. Later he went to Spain where he remained five years. Toward the end of that period he was joined by his old time foe, the Earl of Argyle who, through conjugal influence, had secretly abandoned Protestantism and fallen into disfavor with the government. It does credit to Sir James' magnanimity that he seems to have accorded a hearty welcome to the fallen Earl. It is significant that almost immediately after Argyle's fall and exile, Sir James McConnell received a remission under the





great seal in 1621. He went to London and was granted a pension of 1000 merks by King James.

Sir James McConnell died in London a week before Easter 1626 without lawful issue and was buried in St. Martins Church.

The head of the clan devolved upon the descendants of Colla na Capull of Kenban, second son of Alexander, oldest son of John Cathanach, oldest son of Sir John Mor, third chief of Clan Iain Mhoir. The Dunnyveg family ceased to be a territorial house of Scotland. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

We must not judge the deeds of violence of the Chiefs of Dunnyveg by modern standards of ethics. They merely acted as their contemporaries did under like circumstances. We must remember too that the account of all their acts of violence is given in the version recited by their enemies. Their deeds are probably made to appear in the worst light. These chiefs probably considered their violence as acts of war. They were Chiefs in a clan form of government, which was being overwhelmed by a more modern form of government introduced by the despised Sassenach and we should not be too critical of their actions in defending the rights which their culture had taught them to believe were theirs.

The coat of arms of the McConnells of Dunnyveg and the Glens is quartered. The first quarter shows a red lion rampant. It is the royal lion of the House of Stewart and indicates descent from the marriage of the father of John Mhoir, John Lord of the Isles, to Princess Margaret, daughter of King





Robert II. of Scotland. The second quarter shows a hand grasping a cross crosslet. This device shows descent from the Dalriadic Prince Connal who reigned 560 to 574 and under whose protection St. Columba introduced Christianity into Scotland. The third quarter shows a boat with a single mast. This device shows descent from Fergus who with his brothers Lorn and Angus were the three Dalriadic Princes who sailed in a similar boat from Ireland in 503, conquered the Picts and established the Scots in the Highlands. The fourth quarter shows two islands which are joined in a peak at the top. This has reference to the fact that the house held lands in both Scotland and Ireland, which were joined under one common rule. The crest shows the helmet of knighthood surrounded by oak leaves. The device here, however, has reference to the fact that before the clansmen of Clan Donald South went into battle, they each affixed a bunch of oak leaves to the bonnet to designate himself as a member of such Clan. The salmon is to show their descent from Somerled, founder of Clan Donald who was fishing for salmon when notified that he had been chosen Chief. The motto "Folleowe Me" was the battle cry of the Chief of the House of Dunnyveg.

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## Diffusion of Clan Iain Mhoir.

Upon the fall of their chief some of the clansmen were put to death, some were transported and others fled to Ireland or the mainland of Scotland. By an edict of King Charles I., "the mountain savages called McConnell" as he rudely described them, were forbidden to own land in their native country. Many of the McConnells settled in Renfrewshire, Dumfriesshire and Galloway. In the latter place they merged with the Gordons. Here we find many of them at the time of the Restoration in 1662 when Charles II. ascended the throne. Episcopacy was restored and Presbyterian ministers who would not conform were ejected and their places taken by "curates" although the church services continued to be carried on much as formerly. Riots took place and we frequently find the name of McConnell mentioned among the participants.

The appearance of the name is too frequent to be recited here. Some of that name joined in the futile march to Edinburg in 1666 and were slaughtered on Rullion Green.

The McConnells in common with other covenanters refused all indulgences and driven to desperation by the sternness of Sheriff Cleverhouse, in 1679 again resorted to arms. They were victorious at Drumclog but defeated at Bothwell Brig. Many covenanters were put to death with out trial. In 1685 five covenanters were shot on Kirkconnell Moor. In 1931 six thousand persons appeared at this lonely spot for a conventicle held in memory of these men. Many who were not executed, were





imprisoned or transported to the West Indies to be sold as slaves. Many fled to foreign parts and there was thus a further dispersion of the McConnells.

Some of the McConnells from Galloway became quite prosperous in later times. Their coats of arms indicate that these Galloway McConnells were descended from the ancient house of Dunnyveg.

For instance the coat of arms of Henry McConnel, (1801 to 1871) shows the royal Stewart lion, the hand grasping the "cross crosslet" and the boat, all of which appear on the coat of arms of that ancient house. The coat of arms of James Cecil Irving McConnel, who is still living in England, shows the same devices. Both of these are descended from the Galloway family. This would indicate beyond a doubt that the Galloway McConnells are descended from the ancient house of Dunnyveg.

Reverend E. W. J. McConnel with most intelligent and laborious application, has traced the descent of the Galloway McConnells through this obscure period. In 1931 he published the result of his work in the form of a booklet. It is too long to incorporate in a sketch of this character. I take pleasure in presenting a copy of this booklet to your historical society where such persons as are interested may have access to it. It is one of three copies in America.





## McConnells in America.

There was some settlement of these persecuted Scots in Pennsylvania as early as 1700, but those who first entered this region on the invitation of the first Proprietor came in 1715. They pushed past the Quaker, Menonite and Huguenot settlements and located early on Chikis Creek, Donegal Township, along the Octorara in Sadsburry and Drumore Townships, and in Colerain Township in what was then Chester County, but which on May 10, 1729 became part of Lancaster County. In 1720 they established in Sadsburry Township what later became known as Upper Octorara Presbyterian Church which served Drumore Township as well.

These Scots and so called Scotch-Irish who were mostly of the same race, were encouraged by the authorities to settle so near to the disputed boundary line between Maryland and Pennsylvania, because it was believed they would be more disposed and better able to defend the settlement against the aggressions of Catholic Marylanders than the Friends, Huguenots or Menonites. These people brought with them decided religious and political opinions and their intelligent character fostered in their children the sentiment which led to the Revolutionary War. These early settlers were all Presbyterians and today the old stone Upper Octorara Church built in 1769 is maintained as a shrine for the descendants of these early parishioners.

The McConnells were among the very earliest settlers along the Octorara. In Volume XIX of the





Second Series of the Pennsylvania Archives, page 720, where is reprinted the Minute Book of Property I., there appears the following entry: "2/2 mo/1723 Abraham Emmit recommends Alex'r Miller, Alex'r McConnel and John Scot as sober, industrious persons who request about 3 or 400 acres for Settlement near Octorara Creek adjoining Tho. Reid." This is the first mention of the founder of the branch of the McConnell family we are interested in, that we find in any public records in America. We do not know when he came to this country. Tradition has it that he came from the vicinity of Dumfries, Scotland, and that the branch of the McConnells he came from had merged with the Gordons. Galloway which is near Dumfries is where we find McConnells merged with Gordons, and it is likely he came from Galloway.

He did not live long after the entry of the minute in the Book of Property and, unfortunately for the historian, he died intestate. Among the Chester County Orphans' Court Records in Administration Docket 1, page 104, we find it noted that on May 19, 1729 in the estate of Alexander McConnell, letters of administration were granted to Elizabeth McConnell who was probably his wife, upon entering bond in the sum of 100 pounds with Adam McConnell, probably the son, and Houlden McGee as sureties. Having left no will, we have no record evidence of the names of his children. Tradition, however, tells us that among them were Alexander, John, James, William, Adam and probably Thomas. Tradition is supported by the fact that we find per-





sons so named owning real estate in that vicinity shortly after the death of Alexander.

Alexander, son of Alexander McConnell, died testate in Drumore Township. His will dated August 16, 1752 was probated in Lancaster County April 2, 1754 in Will Book "B"-1 page 42. In it he names a wife Mary and his children John, William, Samuel, Martha, Fenwell and Mary Hartness.

The said John, son of Alexander, settled in Colerain Township, Lancaster County, and from him have descended numerous progeny. His will probated November 6, 1754 in Will Book B-1-81 indicates his children were Alexander, John, Daniel, Margaret Allison and Martha Barclay. The earlier generations settled mostly in Washington, Westmoreland and Beaver Counties. Among these descendants are Reverend S. D. McConnell, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., Fellow of Royal Victoria Institute, of Easton, Maryland; Reverend David McConnell Steele of Philadelphia; Reverend Thomas McConnell Elder, Dayton, Pa.; Reverend Edward McElwain Haymaker, Guatemala; Reverend David Smith, President of Burrit College, Spencer, Tenn.; Reverend Charles Albert McCrea, Oakmont, Pa.; Reverend Russel Hindman McCullough, Delmar, Ia.; Reverend William Alexander McCarrell, D.D., of Shippensburg; Reverend Joseph James McCarrell, D.D., of McKeesport; Judge Samuel John Milton McCarrell of Dauphin County; Judge Alexander D. McConnell, LL.D. of Westmoreland County; Judge William A. McConnell of Beaver County; Judge Elder W. Marshall, LL. M. of Allegheny County; Judge





James Power Smith of West Virginia, and prominent doctors, lawyers, educators and business men too numerous to mention.

The mother of Agnes Sligh Turnbull, author of "The Rolling Years," a recent "best seller" was Lucinda McConnell of this line. This book although fiction, gives a splendid picture of the early life of the McConnells in Westmoreland County. The principal characters named McDowells in the book were in fact named McConnell.

To return to Alexander, James, William and Adam McConnell, sons of the original settler, Alexander McConnell—they sought new homes to the west of the original settlement on the Octorara, but they and their descendants generally located in the lower tier Counties along the Maryland line or Counties immediately to the north of them. As we investigate these Counties westward we find numerous patents for land at early dates to those named McConnell in what is now Cumberland, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Bedford, Westmoreland, Washington and Allegheny Counties. Many if not all are the descendants of Alexander McConnell, the original settler on the Octorara.

It is quite probable that the four brothers William, Alexander, James and Adam McConnell who settled in the Great Cove about 1750 were the sons of Alexander, the original settler, who had sons so named.

The fact that there were four brothers in what is now Fulton County in 1750 with the same names





as four brothers in Lancaster County shortly before that year, makes it reasonable to assume that they were the same brothers.

It is true that we find that the Drumore Township Alexander McConnell's estate was settled in Lancaster County in 1754 but he may have returned to that township prior to his death. The tax records for Ayr Township, Bedford (later Fulton) County in 1773 show only William, Daniel and Adam McConnell at that time, which would indicate that Alexander and James were no longer there. We find that Adam McConnell warranted land in Lancaster County January 23, 1734 but that is the last he appears in Lancaster County records. There is a James McConnell of Drumore Township who makes a deed in 1785 but at that late date he is probably another James McConnell or if the same he may have returned. We find land patented to James McConnell in Lancaster County on six different dates between January 6, 1737 and March 12, 1747 but none thereafter. We find a William McConnell making deeds for land in Drumore Township in 1768 and 1779 but he was probably the William McConnell, son of Alexander McConnell mentioned in the latter's will and not the brother of said Alexander. It appears to be quite probable that the original Great Cove settlers were sons of Alexander McConnell, the original Octorara settler.

As the frontier was pushed westward we find the McConnells ever with the van. The Pennsylvania McConnells were among the earliest settlers in Ohio. Here we find a McConnellsville. There are





today more people of that name in Ohio than in any other State in the Union. Most if not all of the families of this name who have been located there for over a hundred years, emigrated from Pennsylvania. The fact that land in Path Valley, Cumberland County, October 26, 1767 and in Indiana County at an early date were patented to Francis McConnell, and caveats filed in that name in 1767, would lead one to suspect that the illustrious churchman of Ohio, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, could trace his ancestry to Pennsylvania.

The march was ever westward. We find the name in every state in the Union and we meet with such illustrious members of the family as James M. McConnell of St. Paul, Commissioner of Education of Minnesota and a native of Armstrong County; Governor W. J. McConnell of Idaho, whose daughter is married to Edgar Borah, the senior U. S. Senator from that State, and many others too numerous to mention.

At least one branch of the family went to North Carolina. One of the name from that State had a brilliant record as an aviator in the French aviation service before and after the formation of the Lafayette Escadrille, during the late World War. He was killed in action. From that state the McConnells spread through the South, although the original McConnells from Louisiana, among the descendants of whom may be mentioned U. S. Senator Rose McConnell Long, probably came originally from Western Pennsylvania. Previous to the Civil War many of these Louisiana McConnells attended Washington



and Jefferson College, which fact would seem to indicate a Western Pennsylvania connection.

We find the surname McConnell perpetuated in the name of Post Offices in the United States as follows: McConnell, Ill.; McConnell, N. C.; McConnell, Tenn.; McConnell, W. Va.; McConnells, Ala.; McConnellsburg, Pa.; McConnellstown, Pa.; McConnellsville, N. Y.; McConnellsville, S. C.; and McConnellsville, Ohio.

Such are the McConnell footprints on the sands of time. They bring the history of the McConnell family to within the borders of Fulton County. Another who is much better informed on this branch of the family, will enlighten you as to the history of the McConnells in your native valley.





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